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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/050,143	01/18/2002	Kunihiro Oka	33737W013	3844

441 7590 01/20/2004

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EXAMINER

WILLIAMS, THOMAS J

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

3683

DATE MAILED: 01/20/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/050,143

Applicant(s) **SN**

OKA ET AL.

Examiner

Thomas J. Williams

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 24 October 2003.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1,4-6,9,10 and 13-15 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 4-6 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1,9 and 10 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 13-15 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application) since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121 since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

1. Acknowledgment is made in the receipt of amendment B filed October 24, 2003.

Claim Objections

2. Claims 9, 10, 13, 14 and 15 are objected to because of the following informalities: the claims in question recite the limitation of “an electric motor” and “an output shaft”. However, each of the aforementioned claims depends upon either claim 1 or claim 4, which positively recite the mentioned limitations. Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

3. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

4. Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by US 4,327,562 to Gottschalk.

Gottschalk discloses a joint for integrally rotatably connecting a rotating shaft to an output shaft of an electric motor, comprising: a cylindrical first transmission member 16 is mounted on the output shaft 14 of the electric motor 10; a cylindrical second transmission member 21 encloses the cylindrical first transmission member via a gap therebetween; a cylindrical elastic body 24 is interposed between the first transmission member and the second transmission member; flat faces are formed at an outer periphery of the cylindrical first transmission member 16 (see figure 3) and an inner periphery of the cylindrical second transmission member 21 so as to be in an opposed relation with each other.

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Each transmission member of Gottschalk is interpreted as being cylindrical in the same sense that each transmission member of the instant invention is cylindrical.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

5. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

6. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

7. Claims 9 and 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over US 5,472,060 to Sano in view of Gottschalk.

Re-claims 9 and 10, Sano teaches a steering assist system for providing a steering assist by transmitting the rotation of an electric motor to a steering shaft via a worm shaft, wherein the output shaft of the motor and the worm shaft are interconnected via a joint; and wherein the worm shaft is supported in a manner biased towards a worm wheel. However, Sano fails to teach the specifics of the joint as claimed in claim 1.

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Gottschalk teaches the specifics of the joint as rejected above. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to have provided the steering assist system of Sano with a flexible joint connection as taught by Gottschalk, thus reducing the transmission of shock from the steering system to the motor.

Allowable Subject Matter

8. Claims 4-6 are allowed.

9. The following is a statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter: the prior art of record fails to anticipate or render obvious a joint having a first, second and third transmission member, wherein an elastic body is interposed between opposing flat faces formed on the outer periphery of the first transmission member and the inner periphery of the second member, and wherein a torque limiter is disposed between the second and third transmission members .

Response to Arguments

10. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-17 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

11. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Suzuki et al. teaches a steering assist having joint with opposing flat surfaces.

12. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

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A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

13. Any inquiries concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Thomas Williams whose telephone number is (703) 305-1346. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday from 6:30 AM to 4:00 PM. The examiner can also be reached on alternate Fridays.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jack Lavinder, can be reached at (703) 308-3421. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 872-9306.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-1113.

TJW

January 8, 2004

Thomas J. Williams
Examiner
AU 3683

THOMAS WILLIAMS
PATENT EXAMINER

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1-8-04